

FEMC Regional Project: Impacts of Recreation to Forest Health



Recreation Impacts Working Group Opportunity - 2023

Project Background

Forest-based recreation activities are increasing with more people taking part in both motorized and non-motorized activities. Different recreation activities place varying levels and types of pressure on forests. These pressures can be concentrated (e.g., mountain bike trails) or diffuse (e.g., cutting for ski glades), with potential impacts on forest hydrology, soils, invasive species propagation, wildlife movement, tree regeneration and health. Monitoring and analysis of forest health impacts by recreational activities in the Northeast is limited, but of growing interest to land managers.

Project Objectives

The purpose of this project is to assess connections between recreation and forest health spatially, identifying locations with high risk for forest health impact from recreation. Relative impacts of different recreation types will be analyzed to provide land managers with information about what types of forest health impacts may result from recreation on the land. A complementary and simultaneous effort will explore different approaches for monitoring these impacts.

Working Group Objective

The Recreation Impacts Working Group will consist of 6-8 individuals who have interest and expertise in managing land for recreation. A variety of types of recreation will be considered for inclusion in the analysis, such as hiking, camping, mountain biking, and skiing, among others. The working group will provide input on how to define risk and relative impact by each assessed type of recreation.

FEMC staff will use the guidance provided by the working group to develop a regional map of trails that includes types of recreation and areas at high risk for impact by recreation. As part of this effort, FEMC staff will also develop a matrix of relative impact by recreation type.

Working Group Expectations

The working group will follow the [FEMC Working Group guidelines](#).

We expect the working group will meet bi-monthly for one-hour meetings, led by FEMC staff, and have approximately 4 hours of asynchronous work per month throughout 2023. The working group will determine the specific schedules.

Working Group Outputs

The working group will provide known resources for use by FEMC staff in developing a trail map, will aid in developing the relative impact matrix, and generate reporting products. The working group will have the opportunity to review the final products FEMC staff create.

For more information about participating on this Working Group, please contact Elissa Schuett (Elissa.Schuett@uvm.edu).